

Western MRS Meeting Notes
May 24, 2006
McDowell Community College

Counties Present: Avery, Jackson, Lincoln, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Swain, Transylvania.

Introduction

Announcements

System of Care presentation – Rebecca Huffman, Catherine Lester

Announcements

- MRS learning institute, August 21-23 in Craven county. Several workshops. Shorter the first and last day, and middle day there will be several all day workshops so you can really go in depth into a topic.
- Patrick Betancourt is Holly's new Supervisor, he will try to attend the western meeting next month. From Franklin county. Based in Raleigh so you can reach him there.

System of Care

Presentation

- Federal grant that has been granted to 3 counties in NC, one of which is Mecklenburg. DSS and community partners presented.
- Other two sites are Alamance and Bladen. State was intentional in looking at counties of different sizes.
- Power point presentation. Contact Rebecca if you would like a copy of this.
- Typically the term System of Care has been used in a Mental Health perspective. So how does it fit into the NC Family Support and Child Welfare System?
- MRS is System of Care at the DSS agency level. A wraparound, holistic approach.
- There is about a 15 year history of System of Care in the US. NC is one of 9 grants that the feds funded.
- System of Care is a framework of how to provide services.
- State DSS, Duke, and the 3 counties have been working together. Realized that SOC provides the background, and MRS provides the concrete strategies to work by.
- SOC principles and values look a lot like MRS. Want to be collaborative, not duplicating services, not working against each other, build on strengths, cultural competency, and tailor services to individual families needs.
- Child and Family teams a big part of SOC.

- SOC is not a new initiative, new model, or new work. It is the background for how we do work. Strengthens what we are doing.
- SOC is actually one of the strategies NC provided in our program improvement plan based on our last Child and Family Review.
- Historically SOC was in a mental health environment, originally created for children with MH health issues and the history is with that population. However, in 2003, NC was awarded one of the first grants that addressed a child welfare system.
- One of the goals is to build an infrastructure of collaboration. The others are to improve outcomes (federal review) and evaluate its effectiveness.
- There is a state level collaborative for children and families, co chaired by a parent.
- The community interaction piece is critical. It looks different in each of the 3 different size counties.
- Want families to not only be affected by their receipt of services but also have them in turn effect the system.
- Alamance and Bladen have trained community groups to facilitate and have an MOA with those community organizations that they will in turn so something for them since they can't pay the facilitators.
- Mecklenburg trained all their supervisors to be backup as facilitators. An unexpected benefit was that when supervisors knew what to expect in a CFT they were better able to prepare their staff for the meetings. Mecklenburg now has 4 full time facilitators, they have about 35 CFT a week.
- Having community members at the meetings allows for knowledge of available resources that the DSS and facilitators may not be aware of. The community members have been visiting churches, recreational centers, etc. So far this is slow, but working well, and it comes better from a community member than a DSS staff person, but the community and staff become linked this way. Can link families with other families in their own area. This way families can hear from other people besides the institution of DSS.
- Trying to shift the culture of DSS. As well as community partners coming to DSS offices, the DSS workers go into the community to meet with them.
- Regional meetings coming up this fall – similar to a mini-MRS learning institute. Be on the lookout for those.

Discussion

- Holly pointed out that SOC is a tool to strengthen what we are already doing with MRS. This is how you get the resources to serve your families. Talk to the people that are in your community. These resources are here and there are people already working with these families, DSS just has to reach them. You don't have to have a grant or be one of the federally awarded grants. Some other counties are doing it without being a part of the grant.

- Don't just think of your traditional "community partners" i.e. mental health, Family Resource Centers. Talking about churches, etc. This will take time up front, but in the long run it will save time.

Other Discussion

Memorandum of Agreement with Law Enforcement

- Some counties are having trouble reaching law enforcement. They won't come to the table and they are not allowed to go into the department and make presentations. They aren't even at JCPC and other meetings so that they can start talking there.
 - Lincoln has a good relationship with their sheriff. They have had it a long time, explained to Law Enforcement how DSS could help them.
 - Another county had a worker that just took it on herself to develop a relationship with one or two officers. Took them food, remembered birthdays, and that got a foot in the door.
 - See if anyone in the agency knows any officers – are they their neighbors, friend of friend, cousin, etc.

Family Assessments

- Everyone seems to be ok with family assessments, implementing, or already doing.

Collaboration with Work First

- Mecklenburg has co-located work first and CPS in a team.

Upcoming meetings

- Friday, June 23rd.
- Will be talking about documentation in June. We need to talk about this. Duke is struggling to get the information from the records. Although internal DSS staff can read the records, Duke and CFSF are having trouble understanding the records.
- If anyone has tools for documentation, please email Holly so that she can share them.
- We will look at how to keep current on dictation.